

Message Text

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S/S - MR. BRIDGES

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 221876

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR KAUL PAYS FAREWELL CALL ON UNDER
SECRETARY HABIB

1. SUMMARY - DURING A FAREWELL CALL ON UNDER SECRETARY
HABIB SEPTEMBER 3, INDIAN AMBASSADOR KAUL COMMENTED ON
U.S. PRESS CRITICISM OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE
INDIAN CONSTITUTION, U.S. ARMS POLICY IN SOUTH ASIA AND
BANGLADESH'S PREOCCUPATION WITH THE FARAKKA ISSUE. HE
NOTED INDIA'S HELPFUL POSITION AT THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED
CONFERENCE ON ISSUES INTERESTING THE U.S. FIRST SECRETARY
RAJAN ACCOMPANIED KAUL AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUOS
AND OBER SAT IN. END SUMMARY.

2. KAUL SAID HE DEEPLY REGRETTED THE AMERICAN PRESS IS
CARRYING "DISTORTED" ACCOUNTS OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
TO THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION. AFTER SAYING HIS EMBASSY HAS
BEEN COMPELLED TO ISSUE A SPECIAL PRESS RELEASE AS A RE-
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SULT, KAUL SUMMARIZED THE PROPOSED CHANGES, AND COMMENTED

HE FOUND NO EVIDENCE THE INDIAN PRESIDENT WILL BE EMPOWERED TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION BY DECREE AS IS BEING ALLEGED. THE UNDER SECRETARY WONDERED WHETHER U.S. EDITORIAL COMMENTS REFLECTED THE INTENSITY OF THE CRITICISM OF THE AMENDMENTS BY THE OPPOSITION IN INDIA. KAUL COMPLAINED THAT ONLY

OPPOSITION STATEMENTS ARE REPORTED IN THE U.S. AND THERE IS NO OBJECTIVE COVERAGE. THE UNDER SECRETARY NOTED THE USG DOES NOT CONTROL THE AMERICAN PRESS AND HAS CAREFULLY AVOIDED COMPLICATING KAUL'S TASK BY OFFERING COMMENTS ON INDIA'S DOMESTIC SITUATION.

3. THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT INDICATIONS THE U.S. IS PLANNING TO SEND SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS TO PAKISTAN, INCLUDING A-7 AIRCRAFT AND SIDEWINDER MISSILES. KAUL ARGUED THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF WEAPONS LIKE THE A-7 WOULD ACCELERATE THE ARMS RACE, SLOW DOWN THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION AND "STRENGTHEN MILITARISTIC TRENDS" IN PAKISTAN. THE UNDER SECRETARY REPLIED THAT THE QUESTION OF THE A-7 AIRCRAFT IS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION AND THAT THE USG IS WELL AWARE OF THE GOI'S VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT.

4. AMBASSADOR KAUL COMPLAINED THAT BANGLADESH IS RAISING "A STORM IN A TEACUP" ABOUT FARAKKA, EXAGGERATING AND POLITICIZING THE ISSUE. KAUL EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE USG WOULD EXERCISE ITS INFLUENCE FOR A PEACEFUL, COOPERATIVE RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS NOTED THAT THE USG HAS ALREADY MADE CLEAR TO BOTH SIDES THAT THE USG HOPES THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL RESOLVE THIS AMICABLY, JUSTLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY. DUBS ADDED THAT A GESTURE OF MAGNANIMITY WOULD GO A LONG WAY IN RESOLVING THIS ISSUE. KAUL RESPONDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT BELIEVED IN MUTUALITY, REALITY AND RECIPROCITY, NOT MAGNANIMITY. THE UNDER SECRETARY STRESSED TO KAUL THAT THE USG HAS NO INTEREST IN SEEING TROUBLED RELATIONS BETWEEN BANGLADESH AND INDIA.

5. KAUL ALSO MENTIONED HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITIONS ON PUERTO RICO, KOREA AND ISRAEL AT THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFERENCE. THE UNDER SECRETARY INDICATED WE ARE AWARE OF INDIA'S HELPFUL ATTITUDE, AND HAVE EXPRESSED OUR FEELINGS HERE AND IN DELHI. THE UNDER SECRETARY ADDED THAT THE USG IS PLEASED INDIA IS AGAIN REASSERTING A LEADERSHIP ROLE AS A MODERATE IN THE MOVEMENT.

6. DURING THE COURSE OF THE CALL THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR ALSO EXPRESSED A PERSONAL FEELING THAT THE INDO-U.S. JOINT

COMMISSION (AND SUBCOMMISSIONS) IS NOT PROCEEDING AS EFFECTIVELY AS IT MIGHT. HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE NOTE HANDED OVER EARLIER IN THE DAY TO DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS ON THE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL SUBCOMMISSION (STATE 219641). DUBS ASSURED KAUL THE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE STUDYING THE POINTS RAISED AND REPLY IN DUE COURSE. KISSINGER

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